

Herding Dogs as Pets

Fanciers explore whether herding dogs make good matches for pet owners.

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I have to keep the caller listening to my advice without appearing to criticize their dog. Very difficult. If I can get pet people to see it from my point of view, i.e., breeding dogs is a serious profession that costs serious money, and the welfare of the breed must be considered above all else, and the best thing they can do for their dog is neuter him/her, I feel like I have accomplished a great deal!

Sally Futh Collie Club of America receive about five inquiries daily, and an occasional snail mail letter. Actually I don't have to explain too much about the breed, since many people either had one as a kid or just lost theirs and are going through a mourning period. Collies aren't one of the new "in" breeds, per se. The biggest issue is availability. We can seldom produce an instant puppy to meet their demands. Most breeders have a long waiting list.

In the ideal Collie home, someone is home most of the time. This is a family-oriented dog. A fenced-in yard is a must, and ideally children to grow up with. Finally, owners must be willing to groom, exercise, and play with their Collie.

The secret to working with pet people is to listen. Give full information and be sure they are listening; have things in writing. I have an initial interview where they meet our dogs and us and make sure they understand everything before picking up a puppy.

Janet Loehr Old English Sheepdog Club of America We get about 10 inquiries a week, with 99 percent coming from the national web site.

People looking for Old English Sheepdog need to understand when they see that big woolly ball of fluff, the dog got that way because his coat was groomed regularly weekly, and the person who cares for that dog spent at least four to five hours a week making him/her look that way.

This is an on-growing coat, for the lifetime of the dog. Far too many breeders tell puppy people that the coat will stop growing when the dog is a year old. That is not so, and if he/she is not maintained the coat will become a giant mat. The poor dog will feel awful and be subjected to many skin problems.

The ideal Old English Sheepdog home is one where the owners have time for him for grooming, training, loving, and an area big enough for plenty of exercise. This breed loves its family, so it's nice if at least part of the family is home most of the time.